

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has meant different things to many people, but Mormon emigrants to Utah in the period from 1847 to 1870 would probably have been unanimous in saying that an extensive organization was one of the church's chief characteristics. Organization was everywhere apparent. The great migration of Mormons from England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia was very largely an organized movement. Thus pioneer diaries speak of companies of saints on board ship, companies crossing the plains to Utah, companies organized to settle particular valleys, companies to build roads, dig irrigation systems and mines, and raise livestock cooperatively. There were few problems which the pioneers encountered that were not met by an organized cooperative effort. In order to appreciate properly the settlement in Wasatch County we must understand the role that church organization played in pioneer life and note the problems that were overcome with its use.

One thing that the Mormon settlers learned from their church was a pattern for leadership. This often took the form of a triad in the church. Commonly, one of the triad presided. Presiding Elders, Bishops, Presiding Bishops, Stake Presidents—all were presiding officials with progressively larger jurisdictions. They were appointed by the higher church authorities and took office when sustained by the group over which they had jurisdiction. They were free to choose two counselors to serve with them, who were also sustained by the people in their organization.

The presiding elder was an official in charge of a rather unorganized district. Later when the population assumed greater proportions and the district had more

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Rare photograph of Brigham Young, leader of the Mormons; taken in 1847.